

2: PAC recommendation: *The Department should write to the Committee by October 2018 with details of progress it has made with its careers strategy and the impact it is having. It should set up an evaluation framework to enable it to assess progress.*

2.1 The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: October 2018.

2.2 The Department agrees that high-quality careers advice is vital in helping people to make informed decisions on their education, training and careers options. The Government's careers strategy will radically improve the quality and quantity of careers provision across the country.

2.3 The Department has already taken important steps towards achieving the ambitions outlined in the strategy. Updated careers statutory guidance for schools and guidance for colleges has been published that sets out what is expected of them. The Government is investing £5 million to pilot 20 Careers Hubs across the country to build upon the success of the model piloted by Gatsby in the North East of England. The Secretary of State announced the twenty Local Enterprise Partnerships that were successful in their applications to establish Careers Hubs on 11 July 2018.

2.4 The Department has already made good progress in its plans to invest £4 million to fund training for Careers Leaders. The Careers and Enterprise Company published its Careers Leaders guide for secondary schools in March and are in the process of selecting training providers. The first training is on track to be rolled-out in the 2018-19 academic year.

2.5 The Department agrees on the importance of evaluating the impact of the strategy and will consider the progress made by schools and colleges in meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance.

2.6 The Department will write to the Committee in October 2018.

3: PAC conclusion: *The Department does not have enough of a grip on actions to widen participation in higher education, and is over-reliant on the actions of some universities.*

3: PAC recommendation: *The Department should provide the Committee with evidence of how it is widening participation and opening higher education to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Department should demonstrate how they will maintain pressure on providers to measure success.*

3.1 The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented.

3.2 It is for Office for Students (OFS), as the regulator, to seek and report on progress in this area and agree targets with providers. The Government, through the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, has put in place the OFS as the regulator with a statutory duty to "have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in higher education" in performing its functions. The Government has already issued guidance to the OFS, to take forward work on an Evidence and Impact Exchange. The Exchange will identify and disseminate what works from an access and participation perspective, with the aim of ensuring widening participation money is spent most effectively.

3.3 The guidance also includes improving access to the most selective institutions and those institutions that provide the best outcomes. Any provider wishing to be registered as an Approved (fee cap) provider and to charge above the basic amount of fees must have in place an access and participation plan agreed with the Director for Fair Access and Participation. Approved providers and Approved (fee cap) providers whose students can access fees at the basic level are also required to show their commitment to access and participation in higher education through publishing Access and Participation Statements.